



Kevin Humphries MP

Minister for Mental Health

Minister for Healthy Lifestyles

Minister for Western NSW

MEDIA RELEASE

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COUNCIL OF MENTAL HEALTH CHAMPIONS FORMED

Minister for Mental Health, Kevin Humphries, has today named the members of the NSW Mental Health Commission's Community Advisory Council, who will be responsible for outlining a vision for a strategic direction for mental health services across the state.

Minister for Mental Health Kevin Humphries said the Council will provide independent advice and guidance to the Mental Health Commission regarding major issues affecting people with mental health problems, their families and service providers.

"When we conducted a series of state-wide community consultations over the course of 2011 to provide public input into the shape and the scope of the Mental Health Commission, one of the strongest messages we heard was that it was vital the commission would have an advisory committee that was truly representative," Mr Humphries said.

"We listened to that message and it was my pleasure to recently appoint 15 mental health champions from a diverse range of fields to the Commission's Community Advisory Council; from clinicians with decades of experience to people working in our community sector, and those who know first-hand how mental health issues can affect consumers, their families, friends and carers.

"The Council will be the first point of contact for Commissioner John Feneley and his Deputy Commissioners when they are seeking advice on a range of issues related to people's mental health.

"The Community Advisory Council will provide independent advice to the Commission on a number of mental health issues, and I look forward to seeing the Commission and the Council working together to develop a new strategic plan for mental health across NSW.

"I also congratulate the council members on their appointment and I know that they will make a significant and valued contribution to the Commission's work."

Mr Feneley said the Commission aims to reflect in all its work the needs and aspirations of people who experience mental ill health.

The Council has an essential role in keeping the commission in touch with the issues that most affect people's lives in all regions of NSW," Mr Feneley said.

"I am delighted to welcome the council members to the commission today and I look forward to working closely with them and benefitting from their advice."

Council Members:

Ms Karen Burns (chair)

Karen has extensive experience in the mental health sector and is currently the CEO of Uniting Care Mental Health, providing a range of state and national services. Karen also holds a number of positions in governance related to community managed mental health organisations.

Mr Murray Bleach

Murray brings extensive experience from the business sector, having been recently the CEO of ASX-listed roads company Intoll and formerly a regional CEO and Chairman/Director of numerous Macquarie Group entities. Murray holds a number of current directorships and is the Co-Chair of Suicide Prevention Australia.

Mr Tom Brideson

Tom is an Aboriginal man who has provided leadership in the field of Aboriginal mental health for many years. Tom is currently employed as the NSW State-wide Coordinator for the NSW Aboriginal Mental Health Workforce Program.

Ms Maria Cassaniti

Maria's key area of interest is in the development of mental health services that respond to the needs of diverse populations. With a background in social work, Maria has worked for the Transcultural Mental Health Centre since 1994 and has been employed as its Manager since 2006.

Ms Sue Cripps

Sue is currently employed as the Director Homelessness, Mental Health & Disability for Catholic Community Services NSW/ACT. Sue has extensive experience in the areas of housing and homelessness and from 2004 to 2011 was CEO of Homelessness NSW. Sue is a registered psychiatric and general nurse.

Ms Paula Hanlon

Paula is employed as the Manager, Consumer Services for North Shore Ryde Mental Health Service. Paula also has experience working in the NGO mental health sector and currently serves on the NSW Mental Health Consumer Sub-Committee and as Chair of the NSW Mental Health Consumer Workers Committee.

Mr Tim Heffernan

Tim is currently employed as a Consumer Peer Support Worker for the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District. Tim serves on the board of the NSW Consumer Advisory Group and volunteers as a Community Presenter/Ambassador for the Black Dog Institute.

Dr Cathy Kezelman

Cathy worked for 20 years as a medical practitioner. Cathy is currently President of Adults Surviving Child Abuse (ASCA) and advocates for services for complex trauma consumers as well as a trauma-informed approach to care.

Mr Christopher Maylea

Christopher is a social worker with lived experience of mental illness. Until recently Christopher was employed as the Mental Health Services Manager for On Track Community Programs, Lismore. Christopher is currently teaching social work and social policy at RMIT University and completing his doctoral studies.

Dr Diana McKay

Diana is currently employed as Senior Staff Specialist in Psychiatry, Northern Beaches Mental Health Service and is a Visiting Medical Officer at Coffs Harbour Mental Health Service. Diana is a general adult psychiatrist, with an interest in emergency psychiatry and experience in the training of psychiatry registrars.

Ms Jenni Campbell

In her position as Acting Director of Mental Health, Murrumbidgee Medicare Local, Jenni provides management across a range of mental health services. Jenni Campbell has worked in the field of mental health for more than a decade and holds tertiary qualifications in social work and human services management.

Hon. Dr Brian Pezzutti

Brian is a registered medical practitioner and is currently employed as a Director, Department of Anaesthesia and Perioperative Care within the Northern NSW Local Health District. Brian was a member of the NSW Legislative Council from 1988-2003 and has also enjoyed a military career.

Mr Vince Ponzio

Vince is currently employed as Director, Integrated Services Program, Office of the Senior Practitioner, NSW Ageing Disability and Home Care. Vince has extensive experience in the sector and has a background as a psychologist. Vince has also served on the NSW Mental Health Review Tribunal.

Dr Russell Roberts

Russell is the Director, Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Services, Western NSW Local Health District. Prior to this Russell held a number of senior positions in mental health. Russell has been involved in a large number of research projects and has a background as a clinical psychologist.

Ms Erica Roy

Erica is currently employed as the Regional Residential Manager – Sydney Region for Baptist Community Services and has held a number of other positions in residential care settings. Erica is a registered nurse and holds post-graduate management qualifications. Erica is a carer of loved ones with mental illness.